Hazard Awareness Week

Winter Fire Safety

Seasonal increase during the winter months in heating, lighting, cooking, and holiday festivities dramatically increases the risks of fire in your home. Listed below is information and fact sheets about some of the dangers of residential fires and how to avoid them.

Heating

The high cost of home heating fuels and utilities have caused many Americans to search for alternate sources of home heating. The use of wood burning stoves is growing and space heaters are selling rapidly, or coming out of storage. Fireplaces are burning wood and man-made logs. All these methods of heating may be acceptable. They are, however, a major contributing factor in residential fires. Many of these fires can be prevented.

Cooking

Many families gather in the kitchen to spend time together, but it can be one of the most hazardous rooms in the house if you don’t practice safe cooking behaviors. Cooking equipment, most often a range or stovetop, is the leading cause of reported home fires and home fire injuries in the United States. Cooking equipment is also the leading cause of unreported fires and associated injuries.

Holiday Fire Safety

Holiday decorating is one of the joys of the winter season and goes a long way to help brighten up the dark days and long nights. Unfortunately, these same decorations can also become a significant hazard if not used carefully. An estimated 250 home fires involving Christmas trees and another 170 home fires involving holiday lights and other decorative lighting occur each year across the U.S.

Following a few simple fire safety tips can keep electric lights, candles, and the ever popular Christmas tree from creating a tragedy. Learn how to prevent a fire or what to do in case a fire were to start in your home. Help ensure that everyone has a fire safe holiday season.

Fact Link: U.S. Fire Administration

The Scoop About Snow Shoveling

Facts

- While shoveling snow can be good exercise, it can also be deadly for optimistic shovellers who take on more than they can handle. The Minnesota Safety Council offers the following tips to help you get a handle on safe shoveling.

Safe Behavior

- Individuals over the age of 40, or those who are relatively inactive, should be especially careful. If you have a history of heart trouble, check with your doctor before shoveling.
- Avoid shoveling after eating or while smoking.
- Take it easy. Snow shoveling is a weight-lifting exercise that raises your heart rate and blood pressure. Warm up before starting the job and stretch both before and after shoveling.
- If possible, shovel only fresh snow—it is easier to shovel than wet, packed-down snow.
- Push the snow forward rather than lifting it out of the way; pick up only small amounts when needed. Your back will thank you.
- As with any lifting activity, use your legs, not your back. Legs should be bent and back straight. Bend and “sit” into the movement, allowing large muscle groups to do most of the work.
- Never work to the point of exhaustion. Take frequent breaks. If your chest feels tight, stop immediately.
- Dress as you would for any outdoor activity. Dressing in layers is best. Take extra precautions to keep hands and feet warm.

Additional Materials

- For more information about winter safety, contact the Minnesota Safety Council at 651-291-9150 or 800-444-9150.
When is ice safe? There really is no sure answer. In fact, ice is probably never 100 percent safe. You can’t judge the strength of ice just by its appearance, age, thickness, temperature or whether or not the ice is covered with snow. Strength is based on all these factors—plus the depth of water under the ice, size of the water body, water chemistry and currents, the distribution of the load on the ice, and local climatic conditions.

New ice is usually stronger than old ice. Four inches of clear, newly-formed ice may support one person on foot, while a foot or more of old, partially-thawed ice may not.

Ice seldom freezes uniformly. It may be a foot thick in one location and only an inch or two just a few feet away.

Ice formed over flowing water and currents is often dangerous. This is especially true near streams, bridges and culverts. Also, the ice on outside river bends is usually weaker due to the undermining effects of the faster current.

The insulating effect of snow slows down the freezing process. The extra weight also reduces how much weight the ice sheet can support. Also, ice near shore can be weaker than ice that is farther out.

Booming and cracking ice isn’t necessarily dangerous. It only means that the ice is expanding and contracting as the temperature changes.

Schools of fish or flocks of waterfowl can also adversely affect the relative safety of ice. The movement of fish can bring warm water up from the bottom of the lake. In the past, this has opened holes in the ice causing snowmobiles and cars to break through.

Ice Tips
Think in terms of the thermometer rather than the calendar when deciding to go out on the ice. Just because it was okay on December 1st to go out on the ice last year, doesn’t mean it’s going to be safe on the same date this year!

Check with a local resort or bait shop about any known danger spots such as aeration systems or traditionally unsafe areas before heading out on the ice.

Have a plan of what to do if you do break through. Carry rope, ice picks and a flotation device to help save your life or that of a companion. During the winter of 2000, an ATV operator who broke through thin ice used a pair of ice picks to save his own life. A vest-style life jacket can provide extra warmth and flotation in case you fall through.

Driving On Ice?
Don’t drive on the ice if you can possibly avoid it. If you must, follow these common sense tips:

Stay off the ice at night, especially during a snowfall. If that’s unavoidable, be very cautious and drive slowly since holes can open up very quickly. If you drive too fast you might not be able to stop in time.

Be prepared to bail out in a hurry!
Some ice safety experts recommend that you have your seat belt unfastened and a window rolled down or door slightly ajar to speed escape. Don’t wear a life vest while riding inside a car or truck. The extra bulk could hamper your escape through a window.

Don’t go back into a partially submerged vehicle to retrieve equipment.

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Driving On Ice?
2. Turn toward the direction you came. That’s probably the strongest ice.

3. Place your hands and arms on the unbroken surface. This is where a pair of nails, sharpened screwdrivers or ice picks come in handy in providing the extra traction you need to pull yourself up onto the ice.

4. Kick your feet and dig in your ice picks to work your way back onto the solid ice. If your clothes have trapped a lot of water, you may have to lift yourself partially out of the water on your elbows to let the water drain before starting forward.

5. Lie flat on the ice once you are out and roll away from the hole to keep your weight spread out. This may help prevent you from breaking through again.

6. Get to a warm, dry, sheltered area and re-warm yourself immediately. In moderate to severe cases of cold water hypothermia, you must seek medical attention. Cold blood trapped in your extremities can come rushing back to your heart after you begin to re-warm. The shock of the chilled blood may cause ventricular fibrillation leading to a heart attack and death!

What if someone else falls through and you are the only one around to help? First, call 911 for help. There is a good chance someone near you may be carrying a cell phone. Resist the urge to run up to the edge of the hole. This would most likely result in two victims in the water. Also, do not risk your life to attempt to save a pet or other animal.

There is a saying that will help you remember how to perform a water or ice rescue; “Preach, Reach, Throw, Row, Go.”

**PREACH** – Shout to the victim to encourage them to fight to survive and reassure them that help is on the way.

**REACH** – If you can safely reach the victim from shore, extend an object such as a rope, ladder, or jumper cables to the victim. If the person starts to pull you in, release your grip on the object and start over.

**THROW** – Toss one end of a rope or something that will float to the victim. Have them tie the rope around themselves before they are too weakened by the cold to grasp it.

**ROW** – Find a light boat to push across the ice ahead of you. Push it to the edge of the hole, get into the boat and pull the victim in over the bow. It’s not a bad idea to attach some rope to the boat, so others can help pull you and the victim to safety.

**GO** – A non-professional shouldn’t go out on the ice to perform a rescue unless all other basic rescue techniques have been ruled out. Extend an object the victim can grasp. If they start to pull you in, release the object and start over.

If the situation is too dangerous for you to perform the rescue, call 911 for help and keep reassuring the victim that help is on the way and urge them to fight to survive. Heroics by well-meaning but untrained rescuers sometimes result in two deaths.

**Vehicle Escape**

If your car or truck plunges through the ice, the best time to escape is before it sinks, not after. It will stay afloat a few seconds to several minutes depending on the airtightness of the vehicle. While the car is still afloat, the best escape hatches are the side windows since the doors may be held shut by the water pressure. If the windows are blocked, try to push the windshield or rear window out with your feet or shoulder.

A vehicle with its engine in the front will sink at a steep angle and may land on its roof if the water is 15 feet or deeper.

As the car starts its final plunge to the bottom, water rapidly displaces the remaining air. An air bubble can stay in a submerged vehicle, but it is unlikely that it would remain by the time the car hits the bottom.

When the car is completely filled, the doors may be a little easier to open unless they are blocked by mud and silt. Remember too, chances are that the car will be upside-down at this point! Add darkness and near freezing water, and your chances of escape have greatly diminished. This underscores the necessity of getting out of the car before it starts to sink!

A plastic bottle can be loaded with 50-70 feet of nylon rope, and kept ready on your snowmobile. To use, secure the free end of the line and throw the bottle to the victim.

**Your Final Answer?**

Remember, common sense is your greatest ally in preventing ice accidents. Five minutes of checking ice from shore, and systematic checks while on the ice can mean the difference between an enjoyable outdoor experience and a tragedy.

**General Ice Thickness Guidelines**

For new, clear ice only

- 2” or less—STAY OFF
- 4”—Ice fishing or other activities on foot
- 5”—Snowmobile or ATV
- 8”—Car or small pickup
- 12”—Medium truck

www.mndnr.gov/boatingsafety
Frostbite and Hypothermia Awareness

**Frostbite:**
Frostbite is the freezing of skin and extremities on the body. The nose, cheeks, ears, fingers, and toes (your extremities) are most commonly affected. Everyone is susceptible, even people who have been living in cold climates for most of their lives.

**Signals of frostbite:**
- In superficial frostbite, burning, numbness, tingling, itching, or cold sensations in the affected areas. The regions appear white and frozen, is cold to the touch, or is discolored (flushed, white or gray, yellow or blue).
- In deep frostbite, there is an initial decrease in sensation that is eventually completely lost. Swelling and blood-filled blisters are noted over white or yellowish skin that looks waxy and turns a purplish blue as it rewarms. The area is hard, has no resistance when pressed on, and may even appear blackened and dead.

**What to do for frostbite:**
- Get the person to a warm place—a building, shelter or warm vehicle, as soon as possible and then seek immediate medical help or call 911.
- Softly handle or warm the area gently; never rub the affected area.
- Gently warm up by slowly soaking the affected area in luke warm water (100–105°F) until it appears red and feels warm. Do not expose directly or close to a fire.
- Loosely bandage the area with dry, sterile dressings.
- If the person’s fingers or toes are frostbitten, place dry, sterile gauze between them to keep them separated.
- Avoid breaking any blisters.
- Do not allow the affected area to refreeze.

**Hypothermia:**
In very cold weather, a person’s body can lose heat faster than they can produce it. The result is hypothermia, or abnormally low body temperature. It can make a person sleepy, confused and clumsy. Because it happens gradually and affects one’s thinking and may not be immediately recognized. That makes it especially dangerous. A body temperature below 95°F is a medical emergency and can lead to death if not treated promptly.

**Signals of hypothermia include:**
- Shivering, numbness, glassy stare; apathy, weakness, impaired judgment, incoherent speech; loss of consciousness.

**What to do for hypothermia:**
- Get the person to a warm place—a building, shelter or warm vehicle, as soon as possible and then seek immediate medical help or call 9-1-1.
- Remove any wet clothing and dry the person.
- Warm the person slowly by wrapping in blankets or by putting dry clothing on the person. Hot water bottles and chemical hot packs may be used when first wrapped in a towel or blanket before applying. Use your own body as a heat source if necessary.
- Do not warm the person too quickly, such as by immersing him or her in warm water or close exposure to a fire. Rapid warming may cause dangerous heart arrhythmias. Warm the core first (trunk, abdomen), not the extremities (hands, feet). This is important to mention because most people will try to warm hands and feet first and that can cause shock.
- Monitor breathing and circulation.
- Give rescue breathing and CPR if needed.

RAFFLE REGISTRATION

**TRUE OR FALSE:**
New ice is usually stronger than old ice. Four inches of clear, newly-formed ice may support one person on foot, while a foot or more of old, partially-thawed ice may not.

Name_________________________________________ Building______________

Deposit into Safety Box in your building by November 7, 2011.
Winter Outdoor Safety for Children

Facts
- While freezing winter temperatures keep many adults indoors, children may want to play outside all day. Each year, emergency rooms in the United States treat thousands of children for injuries related to sledding and ice skating.
- Exposure to cold without adequate protection can result in frostbite.

Safe Behavior
- Dress children warmly. Clothing should consist of several layers and include boots, gloves or mittens, and a hat.
- Set reasonable time limits on outdoor play. Occasionally call children in to warm up. Provide warm drinks such as hot chocolate.
- Limit the amount of time that infants are outdoors when it is colder than 40 degrees. Infants lose body heat quickly.
- Children should skate only on approved surfaces. Check for posted signs or call local authorities to find out which areas have been approved.
- Children should be taught to skate in the same direction as the crowd and avoid darting across the ice. They should also use a “buddy system” and never skate alone.
- Children should sled on gently-sloping terrain covered with packed snow (not ice). Parents and caregivers should look for terrain that is free of obstacles and far from traffic.
- Sledding equipment should be sturdy and safely constructed. Avoid equipment with sharp or jagged edges. Children should be encouraged to sit up while riding downhill. Lying flat increases the chance of head and abdominal injuries. Sledding equipment should be easily steered. Avoid makeshift sleds.
- Tell children never to ride in a sled that is being pulled by a motorized vehicle.

Additional Materials
- For more information and resources about child injury prevention issues, contact Safe Kids Minnesota at the Minnesota Safety Council, 651-291-9150 or 800-444-9150.

ISD 15 Safety Committee Meeting Minutes
October 11, 2011 • 4:15-5:15 p.m.
Crossroads Multipurpose Room

Members present: Lillian Levine, Keri Neubauer, Chris Neises, Kathy Weiland, Lesly Pounder, Joyce Froh, Wendy Carlberg, Elliott Christensen, Ross Kelley, Cheryl Trout, Mary Lou Dunlap, Sharon Waits, Wendy Kloie, Chris Wirz, Kathy Kohnen, David Lindberg, Marsha Van Denburgh, school board, Gary Kaurala, SFM and Amy Satterfield, IAE

- Member introductions
- Membership review, each building and employee group needs representation
- Meeting dates: 2011-12 • 4:15 p.m.
  10/11/2011 Crossroads Multipurpose Room
  12/13/2011 CSC Community Room
  1/10/2012 CSC Community Room
  2/14/2012 CSC Community Room
  3/13/2012 Crossroads Multipurpose Room
  4/10/2012 CSC Community Room
  5/8/2012 CSC Community Room
- Review accident/injury reports; six incidents were student related
- The districts Allergen and Irritant Policy was passed this summer
- ISD 15’s MOD rating is 1.77 for 2011-12
  MOD rating is three years worth of accidents with lost time
  Normal MOD rating is 1.0. The additional .77 is equal to $132,000
- Insurance walk through inspections; one common violation is the clearance area around electrical panels should be three feet
- Next meeting date: December 13, 2011, CSC Community Room, 4:15 p.m.

ACCIDENTS/INJURIES
In District 15 Buildings
WHICH OCCURRED BETWEEN
September 1 to October 10, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Incidents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cedar Creek Community School</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Services Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crossroads School</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Bethel Community School</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lifelong Learning Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandhill Center for the Arts</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>St. Francis High School</td>
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<td>St. Francis Middle School</td>
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<td>T-15</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
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</tbody>
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Don’t forget to report your injury IMMEDIATELY to the nurse at your site. A delay in reporting an injury not only costs the district money but can complicate your workers comp insurance claim!